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## No Massages For Air-India Passengers

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New Delhi, October 20: | Updated: Oct 21 2002, 05:30am hrs

Civil aviation minister Shahnawaz Hussains idea of de-stressing Air-India (A-I) passengers with the famous Kerala ayurvedic massages on board long haul international flight has been grounded due to technical reasons.

The ayurveda physicians and Kerala state tourism department have conveyed the non-feasibility of implementing the plan for different reasons: Fellow passengers would be screwing up their noses at the highly pungent odour of the medicinal oils, its virtually impossible to give a massage in a sitting posture and where would the passenger take the all-important shower after the massage

Aviation experts also objected to the use of massage oil on planes since its combustible and smelly. We have conveyed to Air-India that ayurvedic massages may not be possible, a Kerala tourism department official told FE. Instead, the Kerala government has now come up with another bright idea of introducing massages services at airport lounges. The proposal is yet to be explored in totality. Kerala tourism minister KV Thomas is keen to introduce the massages at A-Is airport lounges as it would bring cash to the states coffers. The proposal was mooted by Mr Hussain on a visit to London recently, which was later lapped up by Mr Thomas.

The Ayurvedic massages were to be introduced from December on the executive and first class of A-I flights to London and other select destinations, as well as flights from Kochi to London and Europe via Delhi. This was being done to spruce up the Maharajas image and to promote tourism, Mr Hussain had stated. In every Air-India flight there were to be two expert masseurs from Kerala, specialised in Ayurvedic massage, the minister had announced.

But there is still hope of providing some massage services. The ones possible are head and foot massages, said a Kerala tourism department official. Other massages such as Thai or powder-cream ones are possible but not the traditional ayurveda one from Kerala, the official said.

The state government, meanwhile, is gung-ho on the popularity of Ayurvedic massages and is establishing more massage centers at the tourist resorts of Bakel, Kovalam, Kumarakom and Thekkady.

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